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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO CIO SPECIAL  
ENVOY TALVITIE'S REPORT ON ARMENIA AND MOLDOVA

1. (U) Post is authorized to present the following statement  
at the Permanent Council meeting in Vienna on March 13.

Begin text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States greatly appreciates the diligent efforts of  
Ambassador Heikki Talvitie, the special envoy of the Chairman  
in Office, to help defuse the tense situation in Armenia  
following the violence on March 1. Ambassador Talvitie, we  
appreciate your timely briefing before the Permanent Council  
concerning both Armenia and Moldova.

These are difficult times for Armenia and its citizens, times  
which demand principled leadership and national  
reconciliation. The OSCE can, and should, contribute to  
this process.

Armenia stands at a crossroads. We deplore the tragic  
violence of March 1 that resulted in at least 8 deaths. We  
call for the prosecution of all those who committed  
unlawful acts of violence and violated election laws. At the  
same time, arrests of opposition political leaders only  
jeopardize Armenia's reputation as a country that shares the  
OSCE's fundamental principles of freedom, democracy, and  
human rights. The government and opposition must coalesce  
around a path toward a shared democratic future. The state  
of emergency should be lifted, a free press and all civil  
liberties should be restored, and a genuine political  
dialogue should be launched between the government and  
opposition. The alternative is a vicious cycle in which  
social tension increases, police and security personnel  
respond with force, public outrage builds, and the crisis  
only deepens. Using the good offices of the OSCE Mission and  
the Chairmanship, we should encourage all parties to pursue  
reconciliation, democracy, and respect for human rights.  
Armenia's democratic future should be determined in the  
ballot box and at roundtable discussions, not in the streets.

On the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, we are deeply concerned by  
the escalation of tensions on the Line of Contact and deplore  
the loss of life during recent hostilities. We urge the  
parties to exercise maximal restraint and restore a full and  
unconditional ceasefire. The casualties along the Line of  
Contact underscore the urgent need for the sides to endorse  
the proposed Basic Principles for the peaceful resolution of  
the conflict. There is no military solution to the  
Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We recognize Azerbaijan's  
territorial integrity and hold that the status of  
Nagorno-Karabakh is a subject for negotiations in the  
framework of the Basic Principles.

Turning to the situation in Moldova's Transnistria region,  
the United States is heartened by the commitment the Finnish  
Chairmanship in Office has displayed to finding a way

forward. In particular, we commend Ambassador Talvitie for his dedication to building confidence among all the parties and we endorse his call to get negotiations back on track. We hope the informal 3 2 discussions today in Vienna will open the door to further discussions under the 5 2 format as soon as possible.

In this regard, we recognize, too, the valuable work being done by the OSCE Mission in Moldova and its new Head of Mission, Ambassador Philip Remler. Day-to-day work on the ground to promote free movement, economic development and political dialogue is indispensable to building a solid foundation for resolving the Transnistrian conflict, which has gone on far too long.

The United States remains committed to the search for a solution that upholds Moldova,s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The people who inhabit all parts of Moldova deserve a secure, peaceful and unified future. We wish Ambassador Talvitie well in his efforts to promote mutual engagement and confidence building, a goal that has our full support. We would welcome formation of joint working groups on practical matters by the parties to the conflict, as Moldova,s President Voronin has proposed and which the OSCE Mission in Moldova would help to facilitate.

We extend thanks once again to Ambassador Talvitie for his report and for his good work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

End text  
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